1: Herskovits & Herskovits E-5 (1928-1929) 1934
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Saramacca

family. The children of the second wife belong to the family of the second wife. A woman calls her husband's other wife by the name of kamboesa. Do you know what kamboesa means?" he asked, laughing. "*Kamboesa*—the woman who makes trouble for me. So, you see, we people of the bush learned from our ancestors to give each wife her own house, where she might live with her own children."

But not alone the woman needed to have a house of her own. The man, too, built a house for himself. In it he stored his possessions. It was his sanctuary. No woman might enter it. On the carving of its door, a man lavished all his love of ornamentation, all his artistry.

"A man likes to have his own house for his possessions," explained Kasanya. "If he is a rich man, it is better that his wives do not know how much he has. You know what women are. They always ask for presents. But if a man is not rich, then it is better still that his wives do not know it. If they know, they will make life hard for him with nagging. They will talk of leaving him. And all the village will know, too."

In this house, then, which a man built for his wife, the children were reared. Sometimes, it is true, if the harvests were poor or the father had met with ill luck, the mother's brothers would come for the children, for children are the ones to carry on the line. It is through them that clan rank and material goods are inherited.

But if all went well with the father, then the attachments of the household were the closest, and they continued even after death. For the household was not entirely disrupted after the death of a parent. Unless the one who died had been a sorcerer, a leper, or a madman, the house where he lived was not torn down.

"When a man dies," Kasanya said, "the wife goes on living in the house, once it has been purified. If a woman dies, then the man keeps on living there."

"What of the children?" we asked. "What becomes of them?"

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Saramacca

824 796 Later, through the gathering darkness, the people of the neighboring villages went home, paddling their boats which were loaded down with the fish that had been netted. And from this time on, everyone knew that this neku vine was [423] [428] the property of him who had found it, and of his family, down through his mother's line, forever.

"Ai, mati, you would have seen something, if you had got here for the neku dance!"

6

361 Like any other Bush Negro village, S'ei was a series of sandy clearings about which were grouped huts of woven palm fronds and palm thatch. All about was the big bush. [487] [489] The trails which led from the village were each guarded by a magically treated palm azang, and shrines to the ancestral spirits who saw to it that evil was kept away. Where the several paths led, a stranger was not encouraged to discover. Down one, women were to be seen disappearing [482] in the morning with trays on their heads, their infants astride their backs, held inside the folds of a cloth which was fastened high above their breasts, and caught up again below them. In many upper river villages, this path led to the fields, some distance away. Others were the way to [478] shrines, erected to those spirits which must be worshiped outside the village. Another path might lead to a brook, which the villagers held sacred. There were trails, too, which connected neighboring villages, and led perhaps farther yet, but for the stranger, the highway was the river, [486] and no matter how short the distance between one settlement and another, he was not invited to make his way through the bush.

"You do not want to go through the bush, white man. In the bush are evil spirits," we heard many times.

A village clearing was divided into quarters. Each quarter was inhabited by one of the *mbe*, or extended families, and 361 the quarter bore its name. It was composed of several house- 592 holds—five or six or more, depending upon the size of the

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Saramacca

village. A household was not confined to one building only, but few who were not men of rank and means had more than three. One was for the woman and her children, another for storing the crops, and the third was the man's treasure house, where women might not come. It was like the matter of wives. Only men of position could afford more than one. But if a man had two wives and both lived in his village, then perhaps five huts would bear a design identified with him on the carved side posts which outlined the low doorway. This design would recur in the various carvings he had made for his women—it was his crest. And though a man from another village, who was not related to him, might like it, and liking it copy it, this practice would be socially frowned upon.

A village quarter, however, did not contain only dwelling places, and storehouses, and men's treasure houses. Certain families also had in their part of the village an enclosed shrine for the family gods. If in a given family a powerful Vodu, or snake god, had come to an ancestress and had in a dream, or in a seizure, or through a revelation made to an obia man, chosen her as his *'asi*—his priestess or medium—then with this disclosure came the instructions for the place of locating a house of worship to that Vodu, and the type of house it was to be. Such a shrine, once erected, would be kept in the quarter, and worshiped by the members of that family. Sometimes in front of a dwelling hut, a low enclosure, the size of a small kennel, would stand a little to the side of the door. This was a house to Toné, the river spirit. In one such house lived a woman who had a great Toné god. She had the gift of prophecy. When the men gathered for a council meeting in the village of the Granman, then she, too, would sometimes be bidden to come and sit with the men, though, being a woman, she could never speak at council meetings.

"Touch her skin," the other women said, pointing out this albino woman, "and you will have your desires fulfilled."

In each quarter, too, there was an open house where the women did their cooking, and perhaps a platform or two,

/137 cont./

241 and sugar cane, while in the third year some pineapples, bananas, and sugar cane are also harvested.

Thereafter one surrenders the ground to the second growth (kapoeweri) shooting up, here called "kauwé," and to the weeds, like the cutting grass "baboen nefi" (Scleria secans), which prevent further growth of the cultivated crop.

This system of clearing grounds requires much land. It is a severely predatory cultivation which can only be employed when sufficient free land is available. Only after many years can one return to the same piece of forest to lay out a new ground, depending on the recovery of the forest, more particularly on the top growth.

[592] Among the Bush Negroes of the Marowijne it is the rule that
[476] each household provide for itself. The man clears the ground with help of family /familie/ members or friends, who in return for food are taken in during this time. If the man has /138/ one wife, then ordinarily two grounds per year are cleared; if he has more than one wife, then he clears two grounds for each wife.

[622] The captain /kapitein/ of a village lays out his ground him-
[643] self, helped by his villagers. The granman /chief/, however, does not work himself, but, regardless of the number of his wives, has his family and other helpers clear grounds in return for food for the
423 workdays. The products of the grounds of a household are not joint
593 property, but rather the wife asserts her rights over the produce from one ground, while the man claims that from the other ground. Thus a distinction is made between the agrarian property of the wife and that of the husband.

3. The Plague of Ants and the Ant-bushes

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825 In the agriculture of the Bush Negroes the plague of ants plays a significant role. The leaf-cutting or parasol ants (Atta sexdens and Atta cephalotes) are very destructive because of their attacks on the leaves in the plantings. The first-named species is the greatest evildoer in the interior districts of Surinam. Cassava in

361
504 /102 cont./
613 meet the clearings of the people of another lineage; a de facto
423 boundary is thus created, which is henceforth respected.

621 On the other hand, several farming villages of one lineage
241 may have their clearings totally intriqués /entangled/ (this is
613 the case, for example, with the ones of the Antonu and Adiiso
423 habitations). This conforms to the rule of joint possession of the land within the lineage.

621 Organization. The group in a farming habitation is brought to-
241 gether by mutual affinities, and has no hierarchy other than that
602 which springs from kinship ties: authority of the mother over her
592 daughters; authority of the "uncles" over the "nephews."
/103/ The grouping which conforms most to the matrilineal structure of the Refugee Blacks is made up of an old woman, her unmarried sons, her daughters and her daughters' daughters, their husbands coming to help at the time of the clearings but not belonging to the group. Often it is this old woman who directs the habitation, but often also it is an old uncle, her classificatory brother, who has worked with her for a long time. Sometimes this old woman has come to live with her daughters on the habitation founded by her husband.

103 Some of the habitations bear men's names, others women's
423 names. The name which prevails may be completely at variance
592 with the real rights exercised over the land (Ex.: name of Adiiso given to the habitation of his wife where Adiiso has no right at
[613] all). That has no great importance in the eyes of the Refugee Blacks, the only important thing being collective possession of the land by the lineage.

621 For groups which are relatively numerous and brought to-
241 gether more by mutual affinities than by kinship ties, the mini-
622 mum of authority necessary for good feeling and the organization of the work is brought to bear by the founder. For example,

/103 cont./

621 Atikati exercised authority by this right over the disparate group
622 around him, and at his death he bequeathed this function to his
241 sister Adyidya.

[613] Likewise Antonu exerts undisputed authority over three groups of the Awara Bakka lo settled at the mouth of the Inini, for it was he who took the initiative of creating an establishment at this place. If there is any dispute, it is he who will defend the rights of the Awara Bakka lineage.

622 The authority exercised by the founder of the farming habitation is not brought to bear in material living, which remains subject to the strictly individualistic principles of the Refugee Blacks. He cannot require anyone to help him make his clearings or do any work whatever on his behalf.

361 Farming Habitations of the Awara Bakka lo
241 (Antonu, Adiiso, Kakyẽ)
613 in the Neighborhood of the Confluence with the Inini

621 These habitations work soil whose first user was Antonu, of
241 the Awara Bakka lo (fraction 1), which is regarded as belonging
[613] to that lineage. Antonu settled there in 1945 (he was finding that
[423] there were too many people farming the lands near Asisi).

To insure his rights, Antonu put on his land two groupings
621 whose situations are very different:
241
592 1) In his own habitation he installed his wife Asakundu, and
423 around her he made up the work group commonest among the
[476] Refugee Blacks: group formed by the mother, her sons and daughters, the daughters' husbands coming to help at the time of the /104/ clearings. But it is important to note that this group has no right at all over the land: if Antonu and his wife ever separate, the wife's group will leave the habitation.

/104 cont./

621 2) Nearby, he set up the habitation of his sister Irma
• 592 married to Adiiso (Dju). This village is improperly called Adiiso,
241 but Adiiso has no right at all there. In case of breaking with his
[423] wife, he leaves the habitation.

3) Finally, Kakyé, an old woman of the Awara Bakka lineage, settled nearby with her daughters and son.

Structure and functioning of the Antonu habitation. This habitation comprised in January, 1957, disregarding children:

- ○[△] Antonu (Aw. B. 1, E47);
- ○ Asakundu, his wife (L2, E55);
- ○ Kapééki (L2, F60) } Asakundu's daughters, married;
- ○ Angisa (L2, F61) }
- △ Sindu (L2, F62), Asakundu's son;
- △ Maliki (L2, F63), Asakundu's son;
- ○ Yundu, Kapééki's daughter, married;
- △ Anato, Kapééki's son;
- ○ Agata, Akoni's daughter.

The wives of Maliki and Sindu who do not have any personal habitation come there to work, but they are not to be considered as members of the group. They have no hut.

Likewise, the husbands of Kapééki, Yundu, and Angisa
241 come to help temporarily at the time of the clearings.
621 Activity of the Antonu village in 1955-56:

		1956	1955
○	Asakundu	1 clearing with Antonu	1 clearing with Antonu
○	Kapééki	1 clearing with Akuba her husband (who did not make any other clearing)	idem

/108 cont./

62 592 24 423 613 602 406

Structure of the Adiiso habitation. This habitation actually belongs to Irma, Adiiso's wife, of the Awara-Bakka (1) lineage (E37), who was settled there by Antonu whose classificatory sister she is.

Working with Irma, disregarding children, are:

--Her husband Adiiso (Dju, F37);

--Her daughter Chitaïna (Aw.B.1, F43), married to Déési (L1, F45);

--Her son Lawa, unmarried;

--Her son Maïna, married.

Maïna's wife Mbéma, who has no other habitation, has her clearing made there, but she has no hut in her own right and is not a member of the group.

Activity of the habitation in 1955-56:

	1956	1955
Irma	2 clearings (both by Adiiso, who cut a 3rd in Asisi for his other wife)	1 clearing cut by her son Maïna, Adiiso being on a trip
Chitaïna	1 clearing cut by Lawa, her brother, her husband being en mission.	1 clearing cut by her husband Déési

/109/

/Fig. 18 appears here./ /110/

Maïna	1 clearing for his wife Mbéma	Maïna en mission had not been able to cut for his wife. She had weeded a two-year-old clearing with Chitaïna and Irma

621 /110 cont./
592 Structure of the Kakyé habitation. This habitation is directed
241 by Kakyé (Aw.B.1, E18), a widow for a long time and not re-
[589] married, working with her children.
[406] Working with her are:
--Amélia (Aw.B.1, F19), her daughter;
--Papakay (Aw.B.1, F23), her son;
--Akamina (Aw.B.1, F24), her daughter;
--Lébimichi (Aw.B.1, F27), daughter of Yochi † sister of Kakyé.

241 Listing of several clearings of the Adiiso and Kakyé habitations.
592 These clearings are totally mixed with each others' and with
621 those of the Antonu habitation, which is normal since these lands
423 all belong to the Awara Bakka lineage.
[613]

No.	Last User	Year	By What Right	Duration of Last Fallow Period
11 △	Bésu (Aw.B.1, F17), for himself	1954	Kakyé's son (does not work there habitually)	cut for the 1st time
12 ○	Amélia; clearing cut by her husband Sindu	1954	Kakyé's daughter	id.
13 ○	Lébimichi; clearing cut by her husband Asonson	1954	Kakyé's niece	cut for the 1st time

[Adiiso and Kakyé habitations]

/110 cont./

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423

No.		Last User	Year	By What Right	Duration of Last Fallow Period
14	△	Papakay, for himself	1953	Kakyé's son	id.
47	○	Irma; clearing cut by her husband Adiiso	1955	foundress of the Adiiso habitation	2 years (cut for the 1st time in 1951)
48	○	Amèntanu; clearing cut by her husband Sindu	1953	Kakyé's daughter	cut for the 1st time /111/
49	○	Kakyé; clearing cut by her son Bésu	1953	foundress of the Kakyé habitation	id.
52	○	Kakyé; clearing cut by her son Papakay	1951	id.	cut one single time

/149 cont./

592 The household. Household life is a limited association, freely
593 agreed upon by two beings who live totally independent of each other, the emotional life of each remaining almost entirely centered upon his maternal family. It entails reciprocal duties:

--For the man, to build a house for his wife in her village, to construct a new boat for her every three or four years, to cut a clearing for her each year /150/ and help in planting it, to furnish her with imported commodities, cloth, salt, kerosene, tools, which she needs, as well as game and smoke-dried fish;

--For the woman, to farm the clearing and furnish her husband when he comes to visit her with couac and the vegetables
[462] necessary for his food. (The man, used to living as a bachelor, owns his own cooking utensils and most of the time prepares his meals himself.)

This system of intermittent conjugal life seems to assure the Boni a perfect balance at the same time that it permits them
[562] to satisfy their taste for change. The men divide their life among work, visits to their different wives, hunting and fishing expeditions; their life is thus constantly renewed and they are protected against tendencies toward apathy and mental inertia.

[241] In general, as long as the union lasts, the woman fulfills
[422] exactly her obligations; although the yield from the clearing is
[434] her property and the excess of the harvest is sold for her exclusive benefit, the man is assured of getting from her all the
[591] provisions he needs. On the other hand, many men, through laziness, get out of constructing a house for their wives and the latter continue to live with their mothers. In the villages on the French bank about 20 such cases were observed in 1958.
591/ Several cases are even noted in which a woman, aged but still
592 having unmarried children, one or two of her daughters and their children are living together in one house. For example, in Asisi village, nine persons were living together in the very small house of their mother and grandmother Tini.

/289 cont./

157 241 31 in a sector recognized to be undamaged. But objections immediately come to their minds: one would not feel at home, people would be jealous of one another; above all, the children would go pilfering fruit and vegetables in the clearings of other families. The Refugee Blacks are unanimous in thinking that the children of one village put together in a single place would constitute a scourge much worse than the manioc-ant, and that dispersion is the wisest solution for maintaining the peace of families.

562 241 One observes likewise that the total freedom of woman, and the custom which leaves to her /290/ the free disposal of the products of the clearing, contribute toward preventing the development of agriculture with an eye to selling. In order [592] to undertake large clearings farmed jointly by one household, it would be necessary to have very unified and stable households, which is rare.

157 476 Difficulty of grouping for common advantage. The Refugee Blacks are incapable of forming groups voluntarily to undertake the execution of a job with an eye to common advantage. The small groups which get together for fishing, working gold, etc. are formed of intimate friends or near relatives and are hardly larger than four or five persons.

157 454 The Refugee Blacks are still less capable of grouping themselves into societies looking toward future benefits. Putting a part of their resources into a common pot with that of another seems to them not only illusory but immoral. Because of this fact there exists among them no way to group financial assets, sometimes good-sized.

426 Lending without interest is practiced rather commonly, having to do with small sums between near relatives or intimate friends. If a man feels capable of earning his living by buying a motor, he will succeed rather easily in finding the necessary money by borrowing from his brothers or friends, 10,000 francs